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DIGITAL EDITION
HAUNT
JOE CASEY
NATHAN FOX

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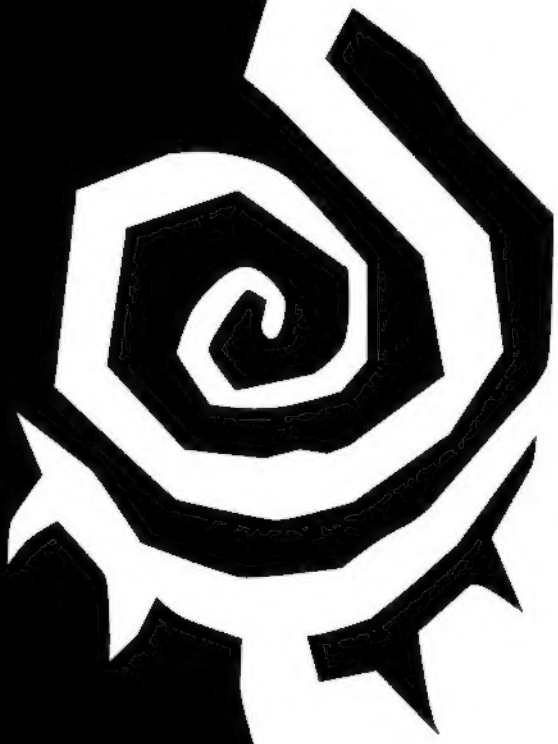
Art NATHAN FOX



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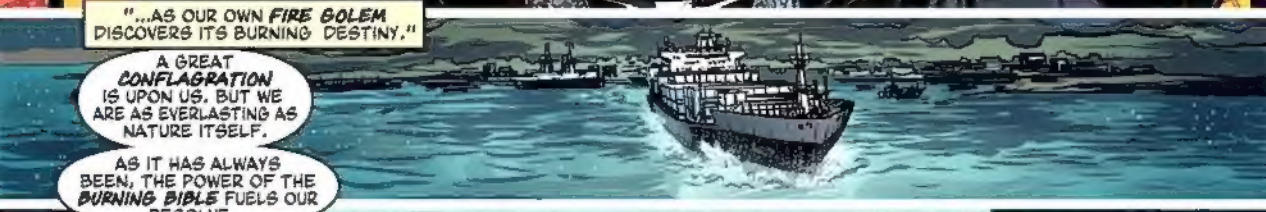
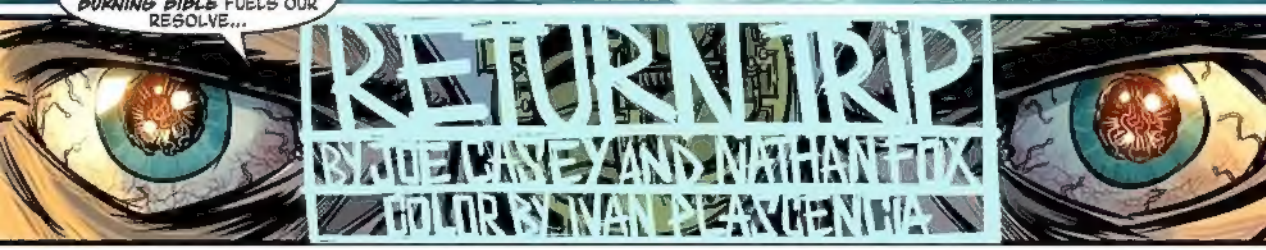
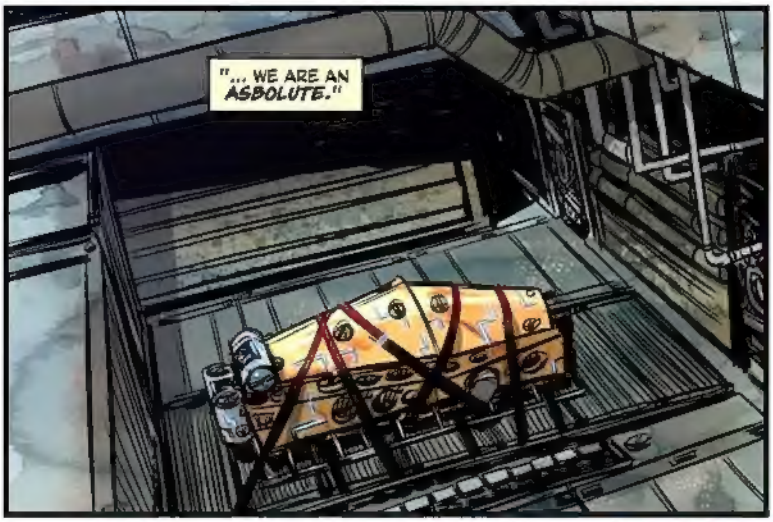
..."THAT WHOSOEVER WOULD NOT SEEK ACCEPTANCE SHOULD BE PUT TO DEATH...
"...WHETHER GREAT OR SMALL, WHETHER MAN OR WOMAN. THEIR BLOOD SHALL BE UPON THEM."
WHEN THE SECOND CHURCH CALLS OUT TO THE WORLD, IT IS A THUNDEROUS SOUND. THE WORLD WILL HEAR US AND THEY WILL KNOW OUR INTENTIONS...


"...AS OUR OWN FIRE GOLEM DISCOVERS ITS BURNING DESTINY."
A GREAT CONFLAGRATION IS UPON US. BUT WE ARE AS EVERLASTING AS NATURE ITSELF.
AS IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN, THE POWER OF THE BURNING BIBLE FUELS OUR RESOLVE...





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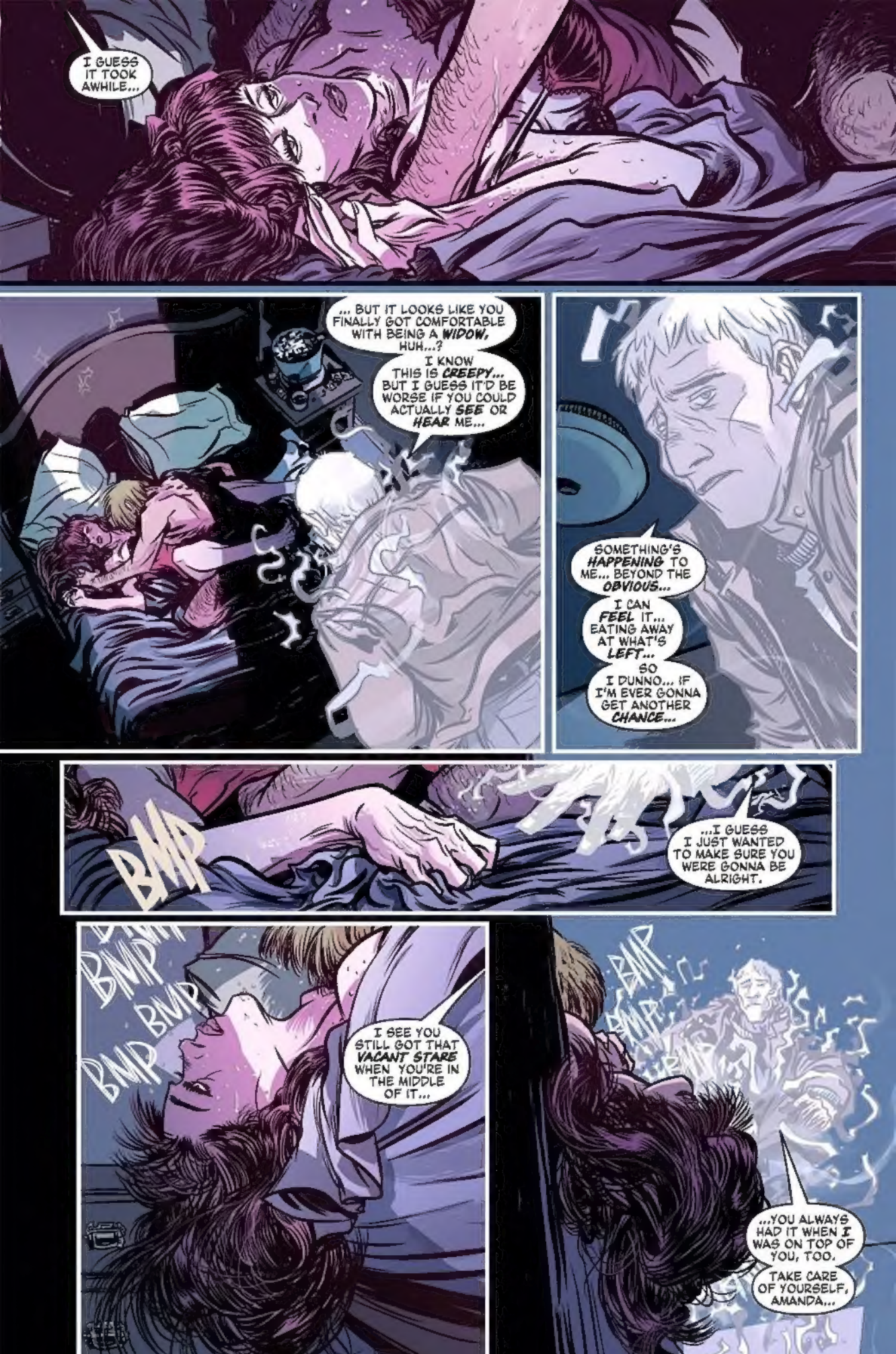
SORRY I MISSED THE SERVICE, AUTUMN...
...I SHOULD'VE BEEN HERE.
AUTUMN KATHERINE MUELLER 1986 2012
YOU DIDN'T DESERVE THIS. YOU WERE JUST... CAUGHT IN SOME INSANE CROSSFIRE...
...I DON'T KNOW.
STANDING HERE LIKE THIS... I REALIZE IT DOESN'T EVEN MATTER WHETHER OR NOT I WAS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE...
AUTUMN
...IT'S STILL MY FAULT.


I GUESS IT TOOK AWHILE...
... BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU FINALLY GOT COMFORTABLE WITH BEING A WIDOW, HUH...?
I KNOW THIS IS CREEPY... BUT I GUESS IT'D BE WORSE IF YOU COULD ACTUALLY SEE OR HEAR ME...
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TO ME... BEYOND THE OBVIOUS...
I CAN FEEL IT... EATING AWAY AT WHAT'S LEFT...
SO I DUNNO... IF I'M EVER GONNA GET ANOTHER CHANCE...
BMP
...I GUESS I JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU WERE GONNA BE ALRIGHT.
BMP BMP BMP
I SEE YOU STILL GOT THAT VACANT STARE WHEN YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT...
BMP BMP
...YOU ALWAYS HAD IT WHEN I WAS ON TOP OF YOU, TOO.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, AMANDA...

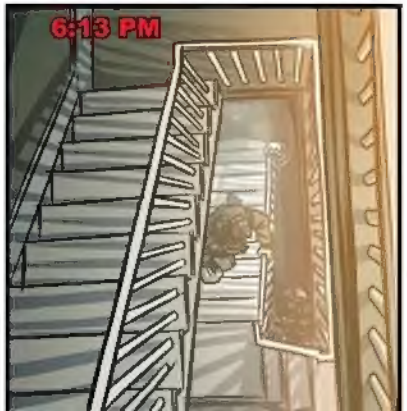
7:43 AM

...
KURT...? YOU AROUND...?

RIGHT.

9:28 AM

12:45 PM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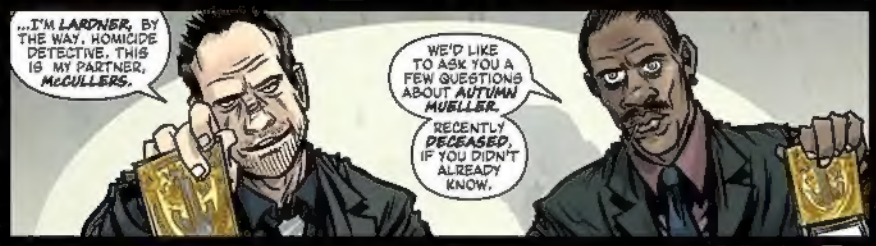
THERE HE IS...
KNK!

...FATHER DANIEL KILGORE.
WE LOOKED FOR YOU AT YOUR PARISH. THEY SAID YOU HADN'T BEEN THERE FOR MONTHS...

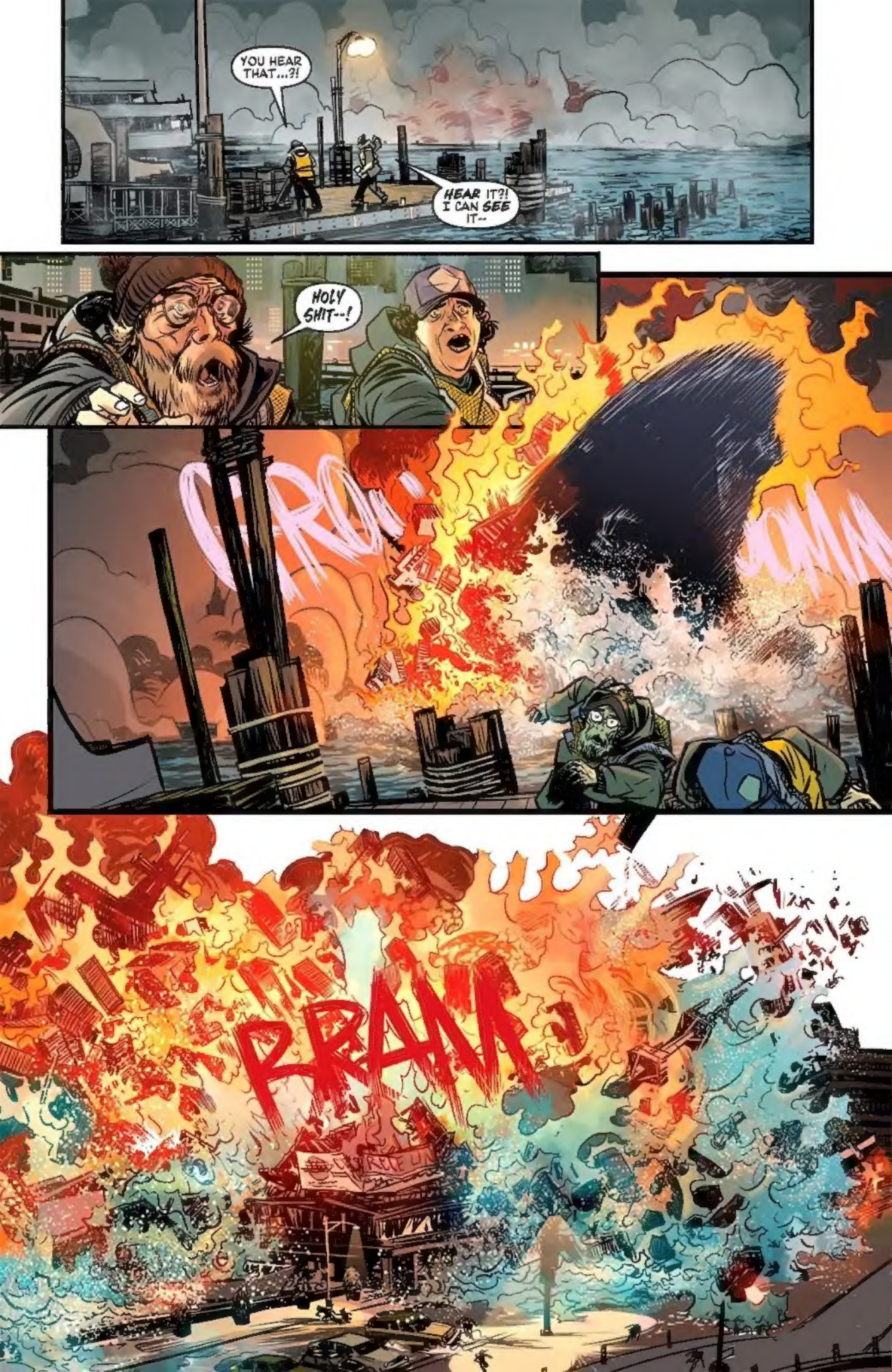
ARE YOU LOOKING TO CONFESS YOUR SINS OR SOMETHING...?
WELL, THAT'D TAKE ALL DAY...


...I'M LARDNER, BY THE WAY. HOMICIDE DETECTIVE. THIS IS MY PARTNER, MCCULLERS.
WE'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT AUTUMN MUELLER.
RECENTLY DECEASED, IF YOU DIDN'T ALREADY KNOW.

IS THAT YOU TRYING TO BE FUNNY?
I'M WELL AWARE OF HER PASSING, DETECTIVE. I VISITED HER GRAVESITE YESTERDAY.

OH, WE KNOW.
WE'RE NOT CASTING ASPERSIONS HERE, BUT ARE YOU AT ALL AWARE OF HOW SHE DIED...?
NO...

PRETTY GRUESOME, I CAN TELL YOU THAT. CLOSED CASKET, THE WHOLE NINE.
WOULD YOU MIND IF WE ASKED YOU TO CHARACTERIZE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MISS MUELLER...?
I WAS HER PRIEST.
I DON'T KNOW IF EITHER OF YOU ARE AT ALL RELIGIOUS, BUT I HOPE THAT ANSWERS YOUR QUESTION.
HAVE A NICE DAY.
CRNK
KLATCH
HMMF.
YEAH...
KLATCH!
SOUNDS LIKE YOU CAN'T CATCH A BREAK, KID...
... BUT, THEN AGAIN, EVERYONE'S LIFE HAS STATIC.
STILL HARVEY TUBMAN.
HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE?
HOW DO I GET IN ANYWHERE? DOES IT REALLY MATTER?
COULDN'T HELP BUT OVERHEAR THE CONVERSATION OUT THERE. SOME COLLATERAL DAMAGE THAT I'M NOT AWARE OF?
MY GIRLFRIEND. WHEN I GOT POPPED, IT WAS IN HER APARTMENT. LOTS OF BLOOD, LOTS OF GUNFIRE...
... LOTS OF ME, I GUESS. SHE NEVER STOOD A CHANCE.
GET OVER IT, SON...
...EVERY WAR HAS ITS CASUALTIES.
LOOK, I DON'T WANT TO GET ALL UP IN YOUR BUSINESS... BUT THERE'S GOTTA BE A REASON THOSE RADICAL CITY FREAKS CAME AFTER YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE.
I'M NOT A MAN OF THE CLOTH ANYMORE.
AND I'M BETTING YOU WEREN'T MUCH OF ONE TO BEGIN WITH, WERE YA?
BUT IT'S A PLACE TO START, INNIT? THAT IS, IF YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST IN LEARNING THE TRUTH...
...I MEAN, BEFORE THE COPS DO.
10:52 PM


YOU HEAR THAT...?!
HEAR IT?! I CAN SEE IT--
HOLY SHIT--!
RRAWR

WOO-WOOOH-WOOOH
WRRROOOOM

KOOOOOM
--WE NEED TO GET ANY SURVIVORS OFF --
SURVIVORS?! YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING-- --JEEZUS!
POLICE
POLICE

GET THE GODDAMN FIRE TRUCKS IN HERE TO --
HOLD IT! SOMETHING'S COMIN' OUT --

CHRIST ALMIGHTY! WHAT IS IT--?!
BLAM
ALL UNITS -- UNLOAD ON THIS SON OF A BITCH!

IF WE'RE SITTING HERE WAITING FOR THE LATE KURT KILGORE TO SHOW UP, I WOULDN'T BOTHER...
... WE HAVEN'T EXACTLY BEEN CHUMMY SINCE MY TIME IN CAPTIVITY.
THIS AIN'T ABOUT HIM. THIS IS ABOUT YOU.
I MEAN, YOU WORKED HERE FOR YEARS, RIGHT? DIDN'T YOU PAY ANY ATTENTION TO THE KIND OF RELIGION YOU WERE SELLING?
WAIT, I FORGOT. YOU SUCKED AT IT.
EXPLAINS A LOT, ACTUALLY.
WHATEVER. Y'KNOW, THE PRIESTHOOD'S NOT THE PICKIEST PROFESSION. THEY TAKE WHAT THEY CAN GET.
OKAY, I'M GOING IN.
HOLD ON THERE --
-- YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE WALKING INTO, SON...!
I NEVER DO, DO I?
BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT...

AMATEUR...
... AT LEAST HE'S USING THE BACK DOOR.
CRUNK
LATCH
YOU HAVE CROSSED A THRESHOLD, DANIEL...
... THE CHOICE TO SERVE IN THIS MANNER IS NOT ONE TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. WE ARE A SHINING BEACON FOR THOSE WHO STUMBLE THROUGH THE DARKNESS OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.
YOU AND I BOTH KNOW THE WORLD NEEDS SAVING, DON'T WE...?
Y-YES, FATHER.
AS YOU GROW WITHIN OUR PARISH, CERTAIN TRUTHS WILL BECOME SELF-EVIDENT...
... SURELY YOU'RE AWARE THAT THERE IS MORE THAN ONE SOURCE OF SCRIPTURE THAT EXISTS IN THE WORLD.
THE HIERARCHY OF AUTHORITY, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS ONE THAT CANNOT BE DISPUTED.

KTAK
... OURS IS A CITY OF LOST SOULS. WE DO WHAT WE CAN...
FOR INSTANCE, THIS IS A PURIFICATION RITUAL OUTLINED IN THE BOOK OF ABYSSIUS. THEY WILL EMERGE FROM THIS WITH A NEW SENSE OF CLARITY...
SORRY. THE BOOK OF WHAT...?
FATHER PEARSON, YOU'VE GOTTA HELP ME OUT HERE...
...I KNOW I WAS A LAPSED CATHOLIC IN MY TEENAGE YEARS, BUT SOME OF THE PROCEDURES AROUND HERE DON'T QUITE --
SHHHHH! NOT SO LOUD...!
THEY'RE A LITTLE SENSITIVE ABOUT EVEN THE APPEARANCE OF DISSENT ON.
I WAS RECRUITED RIGHT OUT OF THE SEMINARY, JUST LIKE YOU WERE. AND I LEARNED QUICKLY... THIS ISN'T A DEMOCRACY...!
... I KNOW HOW YOU'VE BEEN CONCERNED WITH ME SPENDING NIGHTS AWAY FROM THE CHURCH AND --
KLANG
UH...

K-KURT..
.. WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU..?!
OH SHIT.

GODDAMN...
...WHERE'S THE FIRE, GUYS...?
TAK
O-KAAAY... THAT AIN'T NORMAL.
WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS...
HOPE EVERYTHING INSIDE IS AS QUIET AS YOU EXPECTED, KILGORE...

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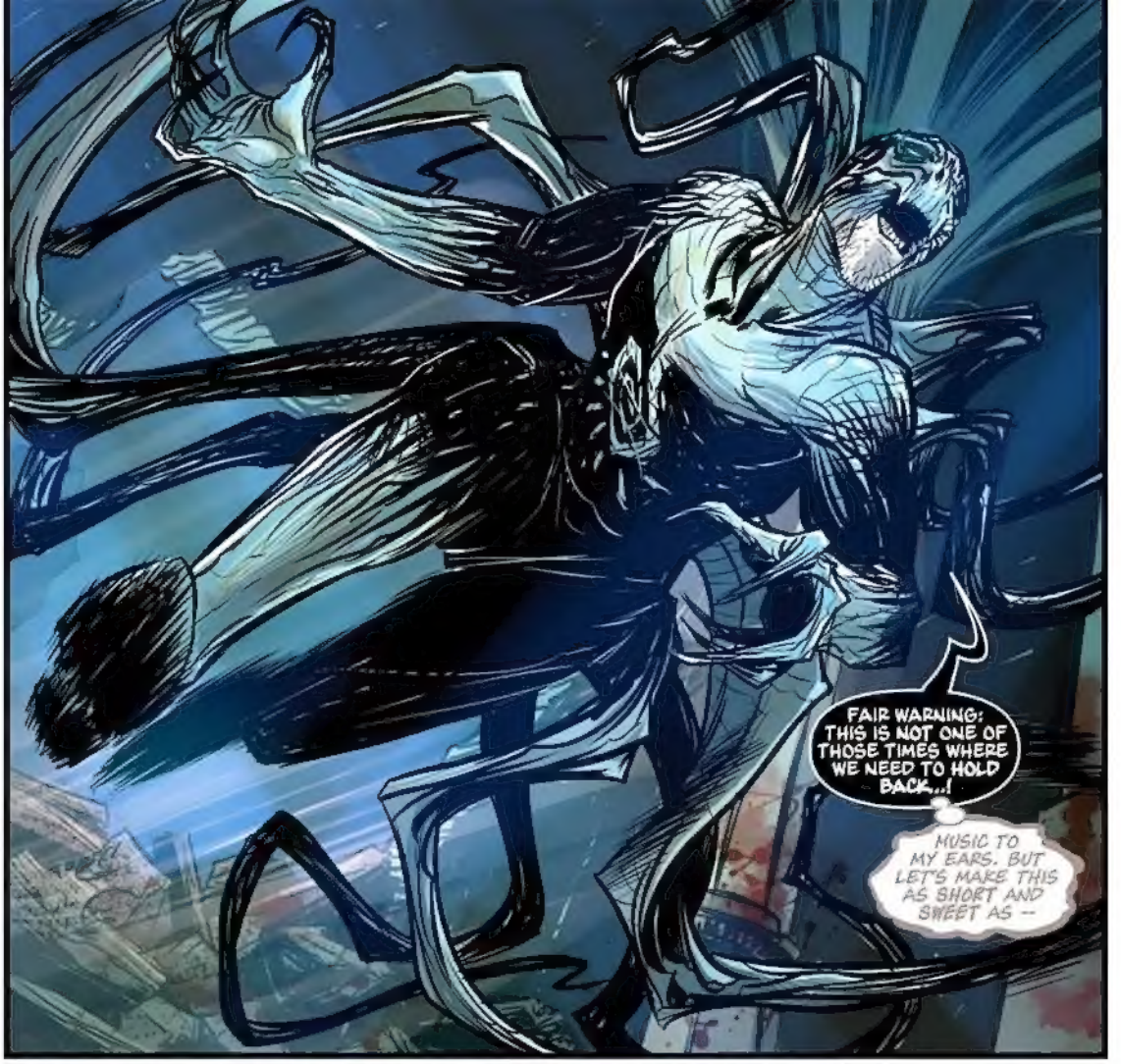
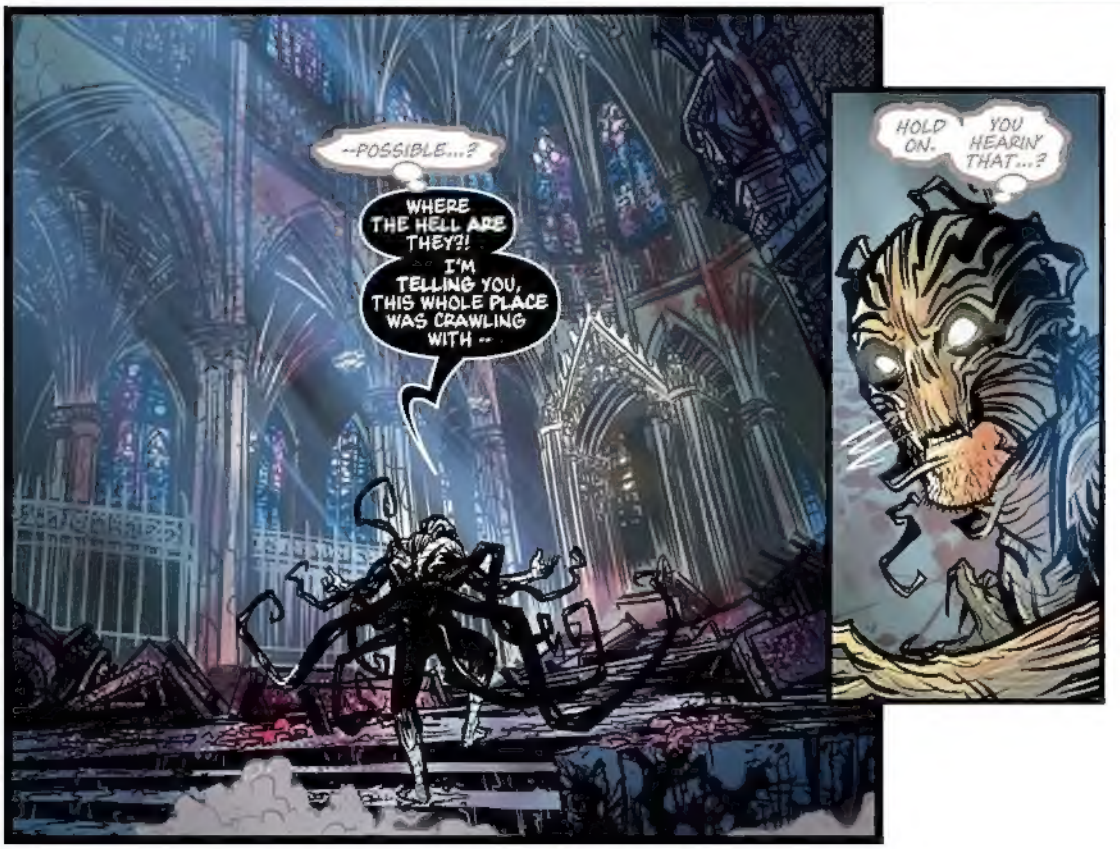
KURT--!
GYUH--!
OKAY, FINE. THIS IS ALL ON ME...
SO... YOU WANNA DANCE --

--THEN LET'S DANCE!
C'MON, YOU UNHOLY PIECE OF--
BLORTCH
NOT BAD FOR A NEWBIE...
...GUESS ALL THAT TRAINING WE PUT YOU THROUGH DIDN'T GO TO WASTE.
LITTLE BROTHER CAN FINALLY WIPE HIS OWN ASS.
HOW 'BOUT YOU KISS MY ASS, INSTEAD--!?
YOU GOT A LOTTA NERVE SHOWING UP HERE AS A SPECTATOR!
THERE'S AN AUDITORIUM FULL OF THESE THINGS, KURT! NOW ARE YOU READY TO RUMBLE OR WHAT...?!
THIS AIN'T JUST FAN MAIL FROM SOME FLOUNDER, DANNY-BOY.
BUT SINCE YOU ASKED SO NICELY...


FAIR WARNING: THIS IS NOT ONE OF THOSE TIMES WHERE WE NEED TO HOLD BACK...!
MUSIC TO MY EARS. BUT LET'S MAKE THIS AS SHORT AND SWEET AS --


--POSSIBLE...?
WHERE THE HELL ARE THEY?!
I'M TELLING YOU, THIS WHOLE PLACE WAS CRAWLING WITH --
HOLD ON.
YOU HEARIN THAT...?

DAMMIT! THAT'S TUBMAN'S RIDE--!
I CAN'T SEE HIM IN THERE...!
YOU'RE STILL HANGING OUT WITH THAT OL' COOT? I GET A VIBE OFF HIM THAT TELLS ME HE'S NOTHING BUT...

...TROUBLE.

WHAT THE HOLY HELL IS THAT?!
FIGURED YOU MIGHT KNOW -- WHAT WITH ALL THE NEW FRIENDS YOU BEEN MAKIN LATELY...!
Y'KNOW, SOME SAY THE WORLD WILL END IN GIANT MONSTER BUGS--

--SOME SAY IN FIRE!
CONTINUED NEXT MONTH!

EMPIRE